3

A Spiritual Entertainment.

A

SERMON

Preached at

Criſpin-ſtreet, Spittal-fields,

December 25, 1750.

Publiſhed at the Requeſt of thoſe who heard it.

By *WILLIAM BENTLEY.*

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A

SERMON

TO THE

CHURCH and AUDITORY,

To whom I ſtatedly miniſter.

Brethren and Friends,

THIS Sermon was preached to you; you found the comfort of it, and therefore you requeſted me to print it, though I gave you ſeveral denials; but as I am ſtill called upon by you, and many others, to ſend it forth; eſpecially ſince this Diſcourſe has become the jeſt and banter of ſome, as tho' I acted a very ludicrous part, in the manner in which it was delivered. You know I always uſe much plainneſs of ſpeech with you from the pulpit, tho' would always guard

againſt any thing that may be too low for that work; but I have a right to uſe ſimilitudes taken from things amongſt men, and to improve them to *ſpiritual purpoſes: the prophets of old did ſo*; *and Chriſt and his apoſtles have done ſo*; and ſo have the miniſters of Chriſt in all ages; and godlineſs was never more viſible than at thoſe times; but in this polite age, as it is called, a *miniſter* muſt run the *gantlet*, if he makes uſe of *ſimilitudes* to illuſtrate, or to fix things upon the minds of his hearers. I have been asked ſeveral queſtions concerning this Sermon by *miniſters* and others; and they have told me the various reports that are gone abroad about it; ſome condemned what they never heard, ſuch ſtand condemned by all men; others take the liberty to condemn what they did hear; but they underſtood not what they heard, or were *prejudiced* to the *doctrine* delivered: I

pity

pity them, and pray for them; may the Lord give them to hear what *the ſpirit ſaith unto his churches*: I have given you the Diſcourſe, as near as poſſible, in the words I delivered it: I could have been more exact, had I granted your requeſt at firſt; but I had no deſign to ſend this plain, experimental Sermon abroad; but now it muſt ſhift for itſelf: May the Lord make the reading of it as comfortable to you as when you heard it; I believe it was ſo to you then; your countenances, and your liberality to the poor that day, ſeemed to diſcover it; and if it ſhould not ſilence the fooliſhneſs of *men*, or convince them, it muſt be left; if they will jeſt and jeer, let them; I have heard, the word *diſh*, or *diſhes*, has been merrily toſſed about in company, and by ſome in the publick character, who teach others; I have made uſe of it, in alluſion to veſſels that are to ſerve up the pro-

viſions

viſions at a feaſt, tho' not altogether for that, for it is *ſcriptural language*. Pray what was deſigned by them under the law? What! had that part of the *ceremonial law* no reference unto *Chriſt* and *ſpiritual things*, And thou ſhalt make *the diſhes thereof, and ſpoons thereof, of pure gold?* Theſe, and every other veſſel made uſe of in that ſervice, had a goſpel-ſignification in them, if we had eyes to ſee; but ſome are blind, and cannot ſee *Chriſt*, neither in the *ceremonial* law, nor in the *goſpel*; and they are angry at all that can. — May a divine bleſſing attend this performance, is the hearty prayer of,

Yours in the Service of Chriſt,

W. BENTLEY.

ISAIAH XXV. 6.

And in this mountain ſhall the Lord of Hoſts make unto all people, a feaſt of fat things, a feaſt of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.

THIS prophet ſpeaks great things of Chriſt and his kingdom, and may well be called the evangelical prophet; he ſaw *his glory and ſpake of him* *, in his birth, in his twofold natures, in his ſufferings and death, and in the glories that ſhould afterwards follow; and of the kingdom of the Meſſiah as it ſhould break forth amongſt the Gentiles; yea, this prophecy leads us unto the glories of the latter days, and the cloſing up of time: this chapter, where my text is, is full of goſpel grace, as it was to break forth in and under the Goſpel-diſpenſation, though cloathed in Old-Teſtament language, of which

* John xii. 14.

which my text is a part. And as I have invited you to partake of a feaſt, a ſpiritual entertainment, before you feaſt with your friends this day, I ſhall, in ſpeaking unto theſe words,

I. Shew you what the proviſions of this feaſt are, expreſſed in our text; *fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.*

II. The place where this feaſt is made, *in this mountain*, in alluſion unto the temple the Lord's houſe or palace.

III. For whom it is made, *for all people*, without diſtinction of nations.

IV. The Founder of this feaſt, by whom it is made, not angels, nor men, *but the Lord of Hoſts.*

I. What the proviſions of this feaſt are, or of what it conſiſts: our text is full of metaphorical expreſſions; *fat things, a feaſt of wines on the lees, fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined*; yet nothing taken out of the flock, or fields, or vintage, is to be here underſtood; though theſe expreſſions in our text have a ſpecial reference unto what God's church was feaſted with of old, under the law; and may have ſome reference unto that grand feaſt ſpoken of by *Moſes*: *And they ſaw the God of Iſrael; and there were under his feet as it were a paved work of a ſapphire ſtone, and as it were the body*

of

of heaven in its clearneſs. And upon the nobles of the children of Iſrael he laid not his hands: alſo they ſaw God, and did eat and drink *. They had many feaſts under the law conſiſting of meats and drinks; for *the law was a ſhadow of good things to come* †. But the entertainment, that I have invited you to this day, conſiſts not in meats and drinks; but as the apoſtle ſpeaketh, the *kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt* ‡. Nay, all the fields with all the cattle upon a thouſand hills, and all the vintages or olive-yards, yea, the whole creation cannot ſpread a table with ſuch proviſions, as are in my text. It has been, and ſtill may be, ſo far as I know, the cuſtom at ſome great mens houſes, or kings palaces, to preſent the gueſts with a bill of fare before the proviſion is ſerved up at table. This bill of fare, which I would give you, conſiſts of five things: 1. The Lamb ſlain, or the fatted calf killed. 2. A ſpoiled Leviathan, that old ſerpent, the Devil. 3. The old man, with his deeds crucified. 4. Death aboliſhed, and the power of the grave conquered. 5. and *laſtly*, The oyl and wine of the kingdom.

1. The Lamb ſlain, or the fatted calf killed; in other words, a crucified Chriſt, a ſlain Chriſt for the ſins of God's elect: this is God's ſtanding diſh, (if I may ſo ſay) to

* Exod. xxiv. 9, 10, 11. † Heb x. 1. ‡ Rom. xiv. 17.

feed and feaſt the ſaints in time, and throughout the endleſs ages of eternity; not one ſoul ever reached heaven, but fed upon this royal proviſion here, and they will need no other when they come there: the ſacrifices of old, were an early appointment of God, to teach and lead them unto Chriſt, the Lamb of God; in all probability, the firſt that was offered up was in *Eden's* garden; ſacrifices began there, there our firſt parents were taught the doctrine of atonement by Chriſt, being cloathed with his righteouſneſs, when God cloathed them with the ſkins of beaſts *, But from *Abel's* time theſe were more in uſe, and the ceremonial law was full of them; the morning lamb, the red heifer, the yearly ſacrifices, all pointed unto this Lamb, this fatted calf, in my text; the *Lord was full of the fat of beaſts* †; theſe he appointed for a time; *but to this man would be look* ‡, the great mediator, and high-prieſt, that had ſomewhat to offer. Let go this doctrine of the ſubſtitution of Chriſt in the room of his people, and his death being a proper atonement for ſin, and the glory of our Bible is loſt, and the worſhip of the Old Teſtament a mere fable and idle ſhew, to pleaſe children; but it was not ſo, Chriſt was preached in them, and held forth in them; *theſe were ſhadows of good things to come,*

* Gen. iii. 21. † Iſa. i. 11. ‡ Iſa. lxvi. 2.

come, but the body is of Chriſt *: *the law came by Moſes, but grace and truth by Jeſus Chriſt* ‡. O let us value the Old Teſtament, becauſe it is full of the ſlain Lamb of God, and our proviſion laid in and under the ſhadows of the law, under that diſpenſation; but now we feed and feaſt upon him without thoſe types. Goſpel miniſters dare not, cannot feed their people with any other food, than this ſlain lamb, or fatted calf killed. The chaff and huſks of morality will not go down with a hungry ſoul, that has a ſpiritual appetite. *Paul* did not feed his hearers with theſe; he did not give them a lecture out of *Seneca*, or *Plato*, or the heathen philoſophers, but preached up Chriſt crucified; *for I determined not to know any thing among you, ſave Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified* ‖; they then fed and feaſted on this ſlain Lamb of God. *Let us keep the feaſt*, ſaith the ſame apoſtle; but upon what? why, upon Chriſt our *paſſover-lamb, ſacrificed for us* §; expoſed unto the wrath of God, for us, for our ſins. The Lamb roaſted with fire, was the type of this Lamb, bearing the wrath of God for us all. The ſaints of old fed and feaſted upon this ſlain Lamb, held out in types, ſhadows, promiſes, and propheſies; your firſt parents, by faith, fed upon this Lamb of God; this was to all the ſaints of old, *a feaſt of fat things, and*

* Col. ii. 17. ‡ John i. 17. ‖ 1 Cor. ii. 2.
§ 1 Cor. v. 7.

of marrow, unto their ſouls. God was to have the beſt brought unto his altar, the fat was the Lord's; and the Lord ſpreadeth his table with the beſt for his gueſts now; he ſaith unto his people, *eat the fat and drink the ſweet* *; and all the ſaints of old did eat of this ſpiritual meat, of this Lamb ſlain from the *foundation of the world* †. To think, and ſay, and write, as ſome do, that we may get to heaven without faith in Chriſt, as a ſacrifice for ſin is falſe; if any ſuch are here, Sirs, you never can, none ever did, or ever will; you muſt eat his fleſh and drink his blood, to be ſaved by him, or you are loſt for ever. It is not Chriſt as an example, but Chriſt as a ſacrifice, that muſt ſave us from ſin; *for Chriſt has once ſuffered for ſins, the juſt for the unjuſt, to bring us to God* ‡; *and he made his ſoul an offering for ſin* ||. Faith feeds now on this, and you ſhall feed to all eternity upon this proviſion; the *Lamb which is in the midſt of the throne ſhall feed them* §; this proviſion will be for ever new to the ſaints above; Chriſt is now, and will be then, *to his people, all in all* ⸸.

2. A ſpoiled *Leviathan*, that old ſerpent the Devil, is another part of this proviſion; he that firſt ſeduced and drew our firſt parents into ſin and rebellion againſt God, called a murtherer

Second Diſh

* Neh. viii. 10. † Rev. xiii. 8. ‡ 1 Pet. iii. 18.
|| Iſa. liii. 10. § Rev. vii. 17. ⸸ Col. iii. 11.

murtherer from the beginning *; and whoſe enmity and oppoſition unto Chriſt, perſonal and myſtical, were ſpoken of in the firſt declaration of grace, *the ſeed of the woman was to bruiſe the ſerpent's head, and he was to bruiſe Chriſt's heel* †; that is, his human nature; or his body, the Church: *And for this cauſe*, the apoſtle *John* ſaith, *the Son of God was manifeſted, that he might deſtroy the works of the Devil* ‡; not only his works, which are many in us and in the world round about us, but him alſo; Chriſt was to deſtroy the Devil, and that in our nature; for this cauſe he aſſumed it, to attack him; and he did ſo openly in it, once and again, in the wilderneſs, and on the pinnacle of the temple, and on an high mountain, and in many other inſtances of his life, and at his death; *for the children being partakers of fleſh and blood, he alſo himſelf likewiſe took part of the ſame, that through death he might deſtroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil* ‖: he has caſt him out of the Gentile world, as to the manner that he played his tricks formerly; he has alſo diſpoſſeſſed him of the bodies of men when on earth; and by his goſpel, *the rod of his ſtrength* §, hath and doth caſt him out of the hearts of the elect world, and makes them willing in the day of his power: *Satan* ſtill, indeed, terrifies

* Joh. viii. 44. † Gen. iii. 15. ‡ 1 John iii. 8.
‖ Heb. ii. 14. § Pſal. cx. 2.

terrifies and affrights God's children, tempts and diſtreſſes them; and ſometimes has raiſed up dreadful perſecutions againſt them; but yet cannot do as he would; he could not tempt or diſtreſs a *Job*, or ſift a *Peter*, but he muſt have Chriſt's leave for it firſt. *Chriſt has ſpoiled principalities, and powers, and made a ſhew of them openly* *: he may caſt down, but he cannot deſtroy, nor pluck one ſoul out of Chriſt's hands; he may be ſuffered to put lets in the way of your perſeverance, but he cannot hinder your perſevering; though, like a lion, a *roaring lion, he walketh about, ſeeking whom he may devour* †. And is not this food for faith? Do not believers feed upon Chriſt's victory over him? ſurely they do; or elſe why that word, in the *Pſalms*, *Thou brakeſt the heads of Leviathan in pieces, and gaveſt him to be meat to the people inhabiting the wilderneſs* ‡? The people in the wilderneſs are the Lord's people, a choſen, beloved, called people; and many of theſe are yet in the wilderneſs; tho' *Satan* may have many heads, abundance of policy and power, yet Chriſt has broken them all; and he has made his people feaſt upon this conqueſt of his over him for them; ſo that out of this *eater*, this devourer of mankind, cometh forth *meat*, *and out of this ſtrong one cometh forth ſweetneſs* ||, to believers; ſo that

* Col. ii. 15. † 1 Pet. v. 8. ‡ Pſal. lxxiv. 14.
|| Jud. xiv. 14.

that they may rejoyce and triumph that Christ has him in his hands, and that he cannot destroy them; he has told them so, *I have given them eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any be able to pluck them out of my hands* *. Feeding by faith upon this victory gained over him by Christ, made the apostle, and doth make the saints still say, *Who shall separate us? not principalities, nor powers*; for Christ has given *Satan*, and all under him, their death-wound, and will by and by finally and totally destroy him, that he shall not hurt or trouble any one of his in his holy *mountain*; for Christ, as the angel of the covenant, now holds him in his chain, and will, by his almighty power, lay hold on this *dragon, the old serpent, which is the Devil, and lock him up in the bottomless pit for ever and ever* †: this is substantial provision for your faith; *for greater is he that is in you, and for you, than all that are against you* ‡.

3. The old man with his deeds crucified, is another part of this provision, and appertains unto this feast: the body of sin is compared, in scripture, to a man, and to an old man; this body of sin is above five thousand years standing; well may it be called old: and it is a body of sin; there is nothing else in this old man but sin; its deeds are very bad; *every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is evil* ||, not only now and then,

* Joh. x. 28. † Rev. xx. iii. ‡ 1 Joh. iv. 4. || Gen. vi. 5.

then, but *continually*; the old man, the body of ſin, has no good motions or deſires in it: the ſaints of God know this; unconverted men think this is a mad way of talking, a paradox it is to them; but the greateſt ſaint on earth has ſaid, *In my fleſh dwells no good thing* †; and Chriſt, the truth, has ſaid it, *Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, falſe witneſſes, blaſphemies* ‡; theſe are the deeds of the old man, the body of ſin, and are called the works of the fleſh; the old man trades in them; the catalogue is large in that chapter ‖: now to have ſuch an old man as this abide under and in the ſame room with the believer, hindering him from good, and prompting him to evil, that he, the ſaint and child of God, cannot do as he would, brings many a dreadful groan from him; the diſtreſſed cries and complaints of God's children in their cloſets about it are many; for they complain more of this than any thing elſe; *Our iniquities carry us away*, ſaith one; *Keep me from evil, the evil of ſin, that it may not grieve me*, ſaith another; *O! wretched man that I am*, ſaith a *Paul*; and ſo again, *the fleſh luſteth againſt the ſpirit, and the ſpirit againſt the fleſh, that we cannot do the things we would; two armies are in me, ſaith the church* *; What muſt be done with him, and his deeds, ſay ſome of you,

† Rom. vii. 18. ‡ Matt. xv. 19. ‖ Gal. v. 19--21.
* Cant. vi. 13.

your? Sirs, I am come to tell you to-day, that he is nailed to the croſs of Chriſt; he is crucified with Chriſt; he dies hard; it's a ſharp and lingering death, crucifixion is; Chriſt was ſome hours dying, but this is dying all our life-time: and yet in a goſpel, comfortable ſenſe, he is dead to all that are in Chriſt by faith; knowing, ſaith the apoſtle, that *our old man is crucified with him, that the body of ſin might be deſtroyed, that henceforth we ſhould not ſerve ſin* *: ſin, root and branches, were all arraigned, if I may ſo ſay, tried and condemned in Chriſt, when he was *made ſin for us, and put away ſin by the ſacrifice of himſelf*; ſo that if you would reckon right, in the matter of goſpel ſanctification, and mortification of ſin, you muſt go to the croſs of Chriſt: how many poor ſouls are burthened from day to day for want of reckoning right this way; they are in good heart, when they find that ſin don't trouble them; but when theſe ſpiritual enemies that war againſt the ſoul begin to trouble them, they are caſting away all their hope: alas! they pray hard, and ſtrive hard, but all to no purpoſe; they thought they had cut off the head of this *Goliah*, but find he is alive ſtill: ſin is afraid of nothing ſo much as the croſs of Chriſt; all our ſtrength againſt it, and all our power over it, muſt come this way: you may caſt up your accompts about

* Rom. vi. 6—11.

your ſanctification, as merchants do their books, at this time of the year, to know how matters ſtand; but if ever you have a balance this way for your comfort, and food for your faith, it muſt come from the old man's being crucified with Chriſt: thus the great Apoſtle taught the ſaints, *reckon ye alſo yourſelves to be dead indeed unto ſin*: How ſo, ſaith the ſoul, ſince it makes me mourn and weep every day? Why, *dead unto the condemning power of ſin*, and unto the dominion-power of it, as it gives *the law ſtrength to condemn, for the ſtrength of ſin is the law*; and ſhall be by and by unto the in-being of it, when it ſhall trouble you no more: *but alive unto God* in our juſtification, in, by, and through Chriſt; and *alive unto God* in our ſanctification, as Chriſt is made of God unto us, wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption; ay, and *alive to God* in our comforts about it, that we fall not into a ſlaviſh, bondage-fear about it. More of this you have in the viiith chapter of the *Romans*, ver. 1, 2, 3. upon this the ſanctification of the Spirit is built and ſecured, and ſhall be carried on in ſpite of all your enemies, till you are ſanctified in ſoul, body, and ſpirit: Sin's deſtruction by Chriſt's death, lays the foundation of our ſanctification in a life of holineſs, that ſhall be wrought up unto a perfection by and by. And now what proviſion is this, in this feaſt of ours, for the

new

new creature to lift up its head, and ſtill rejoyce, though it's troubled by the body of ſin? What conflicts and diſtreſſes had good Mr. *Marſhall* about this matter, till he was brought to this point? all his *Baxterian* principles would not do; but here joy and comfort ſprang in, as he himſelf declares in that excellent treatiſe of his *: hence thoſe exhortations have a weight in them on our practical holineſs, *ſuch as, mortify the deeds of the body through the ſpirit* †, *and put off the old man, which is corrupt through the deceitfulneſs of ſin, and put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him* ‡; this is health to thy ſoul, and marrow to thy bones.

4. Death aboliſhed, and the power of the grave conquered are another part of this proviſion, that make up this ſumptuous feaſt; upon this alſo have the ſaints in all ages fed, and been greatly comforted. *Death* came in by ſin, and is the wages of it; *death* corporal, *death* ſpiritual, *death* eternal, all entered at the door of ſin: ſin gave death its ſting, and the law its power; and digged every man's grave; yea, *Tophet* of old, hell itſelf, as a ſervant of Chriſt in this city uſed to expreſs it: Chriſt has taken the ſting of *death* away, which is ſin, in every ſenſe of it, and the condemning power of the law, and car-

* See his Myſtery of Goſpel-ſanctification. † Rom. viii. 13. ‡ Eph. iv 22.

ried away the pins and bars of the *grave*, and delivered his people from going down into the pit where there is no water: Chriſt, and none but he, was able to do it, and he has done it, and effectually too, for all the choſen of God; and every believer here, hath a right to triumph in it; *he will ſwallow up death in victory*, ſaith this prophet, the 8th verſe of the chapter, where our text is: And was it foretold that he ſhould do it? he hath done it; for *now, ſaith the apoſtle, grace is made manifeſt, by the appearing of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, who hath aboliſhed death, and brought life and immortality to light thro' the goſpel**. *Death* as the wages of ſin, and the rottenneſs of the *grave* are done away, and all the evil that can be compriſed in the word *death*: *death* in all forms and ſhapes, let it come ſuddenly or more lingeringly, by burning fevers, or waſting conſumptions, or wracking pains, there is no penal evil in it to thee O believer; it is yours in the royal charter of bleſſings; it is the way to your father's houſe; it is the high road to your home; it is your gain; it will free you from all evils, and let you into all your ſoul has longed to enjoy, in an uninterrupted communion with God, Father, Son, and Spirit, Saints, and Angels; the Lord will lighten the *valley* for you, and walk with you thro' it: how have the martyrs ſung in *death*, in the

* 2 Tim. i. 10.

the midſt of the flames? *Chriſt came to deliver them, who through fear of death were all their life-time ſubject to bondage* *; he can make that paſſage eaſy to you and I, and make us triumph with him of old, that could ſay, *O death, where is thy ſting* †? and, as for the *grave*, the houſe appointed for all living, to which we are all haſtening, and are another year nearer it than the laſt, it is *called an unclean place*, becauſe it is the fruit of ſin; but Chriſt has lain there, and perfumed it for all his people; and though worms muſt deſtroy and feed upon the body, Chriſt keeps the key of the grave to put you in and let you out, and will raiſe the body glorioufly by and by, *and faſhion it like unto his glorious body* ‡; he will call unto you, *awake, and ſing ye that dwell in the duſt, for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth ſhall caſt out the dead* ‖; you will then *put on ſtrength, and your beautiful garments, and be looſed from all your bands.* This now is ſome of the proviſion of the feaſt; and the ſaints of old did, and to this day the ſaints do feed upon it. *Job*'s ſoul was heartened and comforted by this under all his troubles; *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he ſhall ſtand, at the latter day, upon the earth* §; *David* feaſted upon this, *thou wilt ſhew me the path of life; in thy preſence is fullneſs of joy;*

* Heb. ii. 15. † 1 Cor. xv. 55. ‡ Phil. iii. 21.
‖ Iſa. xxvi. 19. § Job xix. 25.

joy *; *and when I awake I ſhall be ſatisfied with thy likeneſs*; this heartened him and made him ſay, that in the valley of *the ſhadow of death he ſhould fear no evil: the* ſaints in *John*'s time fed and feaſted on this; *it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be*; we ſhall not lie a day or hour longer in the grave, than covenant-determinations have ſettled it; is not our faith fed and feaſted this way? cannot we rejoice in all this? many of us, I hope, can.

5*thly* and *laſtly*, To compleat your entertainment, here are the *wine* and *oyl* of the kingdom, the love and grace of God, Father, Son, and Spirit, and the comforting and refreſhing conſolations of the Holy Ghoſt: this feaſt doth not conſiſt of all eatables; here is *wine* to drink, not mixed, adulterated wine: *wine* maketh glad the heart of man, and *oyl* maketh his face to ſhine; both theſe were uſed in the ſacrifices under the law, and have a goſpel ſignification in them; and are put together by the prophet *Jeremiah*, *and ſhall flow together to the goodneſs of the Lord, for wheat and for wine, and for oyl, and for the young of the flock, and the herd* †: all which have reference unto Chriſt the Antitype. This *wine* of the kingdom may be either the grace and love of God let into the heart, that like *wine* chears and exhilarates the ſpirits of God's children, whereby they overcome their ſpiritual

* Pſal. xvi. 11. xvii. 15. xxiii. 4. † Jer. xxxi. 12.

ſpiritual ſorrows and diſtreſſes; give *wine to thoſe who are of heavy hearts, and let ſuch drink and forget their poverty, and remember their miſery no more* *. This wine of the kingdom the ſpouſe rejoiced in, and ſhe felt the power of it in her ſoul; *he brought me into his houſe of wines* and refreſhed me: it is *wine that goes down ſweetly, cauſing the lips of them that are aſleep to ſpeak* †. This wine awakens, and ſtirs up, and ſtrengthens the ſoul, not as other wines that lull aſleep; this awakens the believer, and gives him ſtrength for ſervice and ſufferings for Chriſt, if called to it: this *wine* is free and unmerited; it is eternal, unchangeable, and unconditional. Creature acts have no part or place here; works of righteouſneſs cannot come in here; it is *well refined*; there is nothing hurtful or deſtructive in this *wine*, the love of God, Father, Son, and Spirit. If by the *wine* of the kingdom we underſtand the blood of Chriſt, which was ſhed by him for us, when he was pruned by divine juſtice, in his ſufferings and death, as the true vine; this ſtrengthens man's heart; by this come in peace and pardon, juſtification, acceſs unto God, cleanſing from ſin; this the believer has a participation of, and it is called a *drinking of his blood* ‡: though the love and grace of Chriſt may be more eminently meant,

* Prov. xxxi. 6, 7. † Can. vii. 9. ‡ John vi. 54.

meant, as the foundation of all he did for us; ye *know the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; this love of his to us his Church, his people, and his choſen, is unmixed; *many waters could not quench it, nor the floods drown it* *. How large a part of this entertainment is this *wine!* Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O my beloved †. But here is the *oyl* alſo, the unction of the Spirit; the more you are fed and feaſted with the comforts and joys of the Spirit, and the teachings of the Holy Ghoſt, *ſhed down upon you abundantly, through Jeſus Chriſt*, the more your face will ſhine; others will then take knowledge of you, that you have been with Jeſus, by partaking of the ſame *oyl of joy and gladneſs which* he partook of; hence it is called the *oyl* of joy; all true, ſolid, ſpiritual, and heavenly joy comes this way: *the oyl of joy for mourning, and the garment of praiſe for the ſpirit of heavineſs* ‡: this fills the heart with ſpiritual mirth, and ſtrikes ſadneſs out of the countenance; as the wiſe man expreſſes it, *a merry heart makes a chearful countenance*; this *oyl* feeds the lamp of ſpiritual life in the believer, that it goes not out; all teachings and leadings into truth, and preſervation from the errors of the preſent day, are owing unto this, called the *unction that teaches all things* ‖: this *oyl* ſets thee a working for Chriſt,

* Cant. viii. 7. † Cant. v. 1. ‡ Iſa. lxi. 1.
‖ 1 John ii. 20.

Chriſt, and keeps thee working for him; it makes thy wheels of goſpel obedience active and ſtirring for Chriſt: we have this alſo as a part of the proviſion. You ſee then, of what royal dainties this feaſt in my text is made up: there is no table of the greateſt prince in the earth can be ſpread like this: but you will ſay, where is this feaſt kept?

II. It is ſaid to be made *in this mountain*, in alluſion unto the temple, called the *mountain of God's holineſs*; to which the tribes came up three times a year, to keep their ſolemn *feaſts*; here the Lord dwelt, it was his houſe, his palace; here he was to be ſeen, met, and converſed with; *to ſee thy power and thy glory, ſo as I have ſeen thee in the ſanctuary* †: and the church of Chriſt under the New Teſtament is ſet out by this figure, a *mountain*; and by the prophets, *Let us go up unto the mountain of the Lord's houſe*, and the *mountains ſhall drop down new wine, and the hills ſhall flow with milk* ‡. The church of Chriſt is compared to a mountain, for her viſibility, ſhe cannot be hid; as mountains are the higheſt parts of the earth, and viſible, ſo is ſhe: and ſhe is compared unto a mountain for her duration; when mountains are removed, ſhe ſhall continue for ever and ever; the Lord has had and will have a church to continue upon

† Pſal. lxiii. 2. ‡ Amos iii. 18.

earth, 'till he has accompliſhed all his pleaſure in her; Hell and Antichriſt have ſtrove all they could to deſtroy this *mountain*, and dig it up by the roots, but all in vain; *the gates of hell ſhall not prevail againſt her* *; her bullwarks are ſtrong and impregnable; *the Lord is there*, he keepeth houſe, he dwells there; and will be *unto her a wall of fire round about, and the glory in the midſt of her* †; here the feaſt and entertainment in my text is made; this is the *Lord's banqueting houſe*.

1. This is made every Lord's day, ſtatedly, in his churches; and occaſionally, whenever the goſpel of a crucified Chriſt is preached, in the glories of his perſon, grace, and fullneſs; the miniſters of Chriſt are to bring this proviſion unto you every day; they are ſuch meſſages as theſe, which make the feet of goſpel-miniſters *beautiful upon the mountains* ‡; 'tis preaching peace and pardon, righteouſneſs and life by Chriſt; 'tis bringing Chriſt down from above, by the miniſtration of the goſpel, that makes your hearts glad; all other preachings and preachers are but trifling away their time, and ſtarving the ſouls of their hearers: a *Paul* thought ſo, and therefore, ſaith he, *woe to me, if I preach not the goſpel of Chriſt* ||. Theſe things comfort and refreſh the ſaints of God; we are commanded to bring them to you, and to keep

* Matth. xvi. 18. † Zech. ii. 5. ‡ Iſa. lii. 7.
|| 1 Cor. ix. 16.

keep them back, would be to rob the children of their bread. *Comfort ye my people*; with what meſſages? why, ſay, *That her warfare is accompliſhed, and that her iniquities are pardoned, for ſhe hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her ſins* *. We are to tell you this proviſion is ready, the Lamb is ſlain, the fatted calf is killed, Chriſt has deſtroyed the Devil, crucified the old man, aboliſhed death, and conquered the grave, and gives out the *wine* and *oyl* of the kingdom; *all is done*: this is the voice out of the goſpel-temple; and we that are miniſters ſhould tell the people ſo, *it is done* † and not to be done: come, for all things are ready; thus wiſdom's maidens ſaid, *Her table is furniſhed, ſhe hath killed her beaſts, ſhe hath mingled her wine; come, eat of my bread and drink of my wine* ‡.

2. This proviſion is made or ſerved up in the adminiſtration of *goſpel-ordinances*: the ordinances of the goſpel may be compared unto *diſhes*, in which, as proper veſſels, the proviſion of this feaſt is ſerved up for your entertainment, delight, and refreſhment, comfort, joy, and ſtrength in the way; and theſe are *golden diſhes, ordinances of divine appointment*, in which the ſaints are refreſhed, and fed, and feaſted; ſuch as *praiſe, prayer, hearing the word*, and *communion of ſaints* at the *table of the Lord*; all theſe are couched

* Iſa. xl. 1. † Rev. xvi. 17. ‡ Prov. ix. 5.

in that word, *he brought me into his banqueting houſe, and his banner over me was love* *. In theſe ordinances, Chriſt, in all his grace and fulneſs is held out to us; theſe are called ſometimes *breaſts of conſolation*, and at other times *pools* and *wells* that yield joy unto our ſouls; and in theſe *ordinances* the proviſion of this feaſt is conveyed; they ſhall be abundantly *ſatisfied with the fatneſs of thine houſe, and thou ſhalt make them drink of the rivers of thy pleaſure* †: theſe *ordinances* Chriſt fills and refreſhes his people with; he *aſcended on high to fill all things*; and therefore value them, make uſe of them, if you would have your ſpiritual ſtrength and coaſt enlarged; *for they that wait upon the Lord ſhall renew their ſtrength* ‡.

III. For whom is this feaſt made? *for all people:* this feaſt, in and under the Old Teſtament, was confined unto *the Jews*; but ſince Chriſt came, he has pulled down the wall of ſeparation, and the Gentiles are to eat and partake of it as well as they: this great myſtery, of calling of the Gentiles to the participation of this *feaſt*, and the apoſtle *Paul* being the meſſenger of it unto them, made him wonder, ſaying, *Unto me, who am leſs than the leaſt of all ſaints, is this grace given, that I ſhould preach amongſt the Gentiles the unſearchable*

* Cant. ii. 4. † Pſal. xxxvi. 8. ‡ Iſa. xl. 31.

ſearchable riches of Chriſt *. *So* that the words *all people* here, have reference unto the Gentiles, by way of diſtinction from the Jews, that this proviſion ſhould not be confined to them only; for Chriſt was to *be for ſalvation unto the ends of the earth*: he has a people amongſt all nations; for *his name was called Jeſus, becauſe he ſaves his people from their ſins*; it cannot be meant of every individual ſon and daughter of *Adam*, for the knowledge of this proviſion is not made known unto them all in that ſenſe; nor of all that ſit under the ſound of the goſpel miniſtration; for to ſome, this miniſtration of grace, and the proviſions of grace, *are a ſavour of life, and to others a ſavour of death*; in both which, the miniſters of Chriſt, in diſpenſing the truth according unto the will of God, *are unto God a ſweet ſavour of Chriſt, in them that are ſaved, and in them that periſh* †. Chriſt has given us a key to this and many other texts, where ſuch univerſal terms are made uſe of, *And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to me* ‡; that Chriſt doth and will draw all men to him, for whom he was lifted up upon the croſs, and is now lifted up upon the throne, is undeniably true, and no others; for his death for them, and his working effectually in them, to ſave them from the power of ſin and unbelief, go together, in this text, and

* Eph. iii. 8. † 2 Cor. ii. 15. ‡ John xii. 32.

and in multitudes of other Scriptures, where the word *all* is made uſe of; which muſt deſtroy univerſal redemption, and eſtabliſh the contrary doctrine, as might be evinced; but that is not my work now. *Chriſt died, the juſt for the unjuſt, that he might bring us to God* *.

1. This feaſt is made for all hungry and thirſty ſouls, thoſe in whom the Holy Ghoſt hath created a ſpiritual appetite and deſire after the proviſion of my text; *bleſſed* are ſuch (I hope I ſpeak to many ſuch to-day) they ſhall be *filled* with the *fatneſs of God's houſe*; Chriſt hath promiſed it, and he is as good as his word, *Bleſſed are they that do hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs, for they ſhall be filled* †; your ſouls ſhall live; this proviſion ſhall be given you; here you may feed, and be ſatisfied; for Chriſt doth and will ſatisfy the longing ſoul, *and fill the hungry ſoul with goodneſs*; ſuch deſires ſhall be granted, becauſe they are ſpiritual; and nothing but what is ſpiritual, can ſatisfy ſuch ſouls; they cannot live upon traſh, they muſt have this food; the language of their ſouls is, *evermore give us this bread*; they daily deſire to eat Chriſt's fleſh and to drink his blood.

2. It is made for all weary and heavy-laden ſouls, that have lived upon their own bread, and drank waters for a long while out of their own ciſterns, but cannot now ſpend their

* 1 Pet. iii. 18. † Matth. v. 6.

their money any longer this way, *nor their labour for that which ſatisfies not*: they now ſee the folly and ſinfulneſs of going about to ſave themſelves, and eſtabliſh a righteouſneſs of their own; and of thinking, that a few prayers, or tears, or an external reformation and amendment will do; they are burthened about their former conduct this way, and dare not, as they once did, and as many do in our day, both preachers and people, *eat their own bread and wear their own apparel, but are willing to be called by the name of Chriſt* *: they would be called Chriſtians, and thought to be Chriſtians, and if you ſuſpect them they are angry at you, though they openly deny and contemn the doctrine of Chriſt's atonement, and his imputed righteouſneſs; what ſwarms of ſuch have we in this day! but ſuch that Chriſt calls to this feaſt are weary and heavy laden; ſuch he invites to this bleſſed entertainment, *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt* †; this is only to be had in Chriſt; there is no reſt or peace, joy or comfort any where elſe. And all this proviſion in my text is to be had for nothing; this is not to be purchaſed or bought. Come and welcome to this feaſt all ſuch; *Ho, every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat* ‡; this

* Iſa. iv. 1. † Matth. xi. 28. ‡ Iſa. lv. 1.

this proviſion, and this only, will ſatisfy your weary, and repleniſh your ſorrowful ſouls.

3. Its a feaſt for all renegadoes or prodigals, that have run from God, are back-ſlidden, and gone aſtray; that have acted the part of the prodigal ſon, who ſaid to his father, *Give me the portion of goods that falleth to me*, and I will be gone, and get out of your ſight, from under your roof, and from your admonition, correction, and advice; I will take my own way, go where I will, and do what I will: we are *lords, and will come no more unto thee*; it may be, ſome ſuch are amongſt us to-day: nay, hath it not been the caſe of us all who believe, at one time or at another? doth not our back-ſlidings teſtify unto our face? Well, here is proviſion for prodigals, returning prodigals; Are you pinched in the belly, and pinched in the back and the pocket too? Is the language of your hearts, *I will ariſe and go unto my father, and will ſay, father, I have ſinned againſt heaven and before thee* *; I am in a ſtarving and in a ragged condition, impoveriſhed to the laſt degree, and there is *bread enough in my father's houſe, and to ſpare, and I periſh with hunger* †: your father hath ſeen you a great way off, and his bowels moved towards you, that you are now like *Ephraim*, ſmiting upon your thigh: O, how many

* Luke xv. 18. † Ibid. ver. 17.

many thouſand fools haſt thou called thyſelf for this folly of thine? Well, ſoul, my text is full of comfort for you; the fatted calf is killed for you; the beſt robe is provided for you; the marriage-ring is for you; the ſhoes are for you; and the muſick in the houſe of God is for you. Much joy there is, when a prodigal is returned, to God, to Chriſt, ſaints and angels; (tho' ſome may, like the elder ſon, be angry for a ſeaſon:) this is a freſh cloathing, feeding, and marrying, of thee unto the Lord, a freſh experience of it; now the Lord Chriſt again betrotheth thee unto himſelf, in righteouſneſs, in judgment, in loving-kindneſs, and in tender mercies for ever.

4. and *laſtly*, It is for all that have any deſire after this proviſion, be you who you will, or what you will; if you never had a deſire after it till now, it is *for you*, be you of what age or condition, ſect or denomination, rich or poor, high or low, male or female, bond or free, there is no exception againſt you in my text: Satan, it may be, and your carnal reaſon may be for putting in ſome exception; but Chriſt putteth in none, the ſpirit of God putteth in none, the miniſters of Chriſt put in none; there is no price in this matter, as I ſaid before; *It is without money and without price: in the laſt day, that great day of the feaſt, Jeſus ſtood and cried, ſaying, If any*

man thirſt, let him come to me and drink *; and thus Chriſt ſpeaks to all ſuch by his miniſters; and *the ſpirit and the bride, ſay, come; and let him that heareth, ſay, come; and let him that is athirſt come; and whoſoever will let him take of the water of life freely* †. You ſhall never be rejected feeding upon this proviſion, or coming unto this feaſt; I have Chriſt's words for your encouragement; *Him that cometh to me I will in no wiſe caſt out* ‡. It is not what you have been or done ſhould be a bar in your way; this proviſion is for the chiefeſt of ſinners, *ſinners of all ſorts*; Chriſt therefore calls not the righteous to this feaſt, *but ſinners*; the whole need not this proviſion, but *the ſick*; it is fit for them, and only them; this is worthy of all acceptation, that *Chriſt Jeſus came into the world to ſave ſinners, of whom I am the chief* ‖; and the *Corinthian* ſinners thought ſo, of whom you have a black catalogue; but *they were waſhed, ſanctified, and juſtified in the name of the Lord Jeſus, and by the ſpirit of our God* §: theſe fed and feaſted upon this entertainment.

IV. The founder of this feaſt is next to be ſhown, who is not men, nor angels; our text informeth us who it is, *the Lord of hoſts*: all the perſons in the Trinity are concerned in

* John vii. 37. † Rev. xxii. 17. ‡ John vi. 37.
‖ 1 Tim. i. 15. § 1 Cor. vi. 11.

in it; but Jehovah, God the Father, is principally intended here; he prepared the Lamb for a ſacrifice; he ſent him into the world, in the fulneſs of time to fulfil the law, to put away ſin, to deſtroy Satan, to aboliſh death, and conquer the grave. All the angels in heaven could not have done this; *I have laid help, ſaith Jehovah the Father, upon one that is mighty* *; *I have found a ranſom*; *God ſhall ſee and provide, ſaith Abraham*; and ſo God did, when the fulneſs of time was come; *God ſent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law* †. Chriſt himſelf may alſo be underſtood in our text; he gave himſelf in covenant for us, and in time, *loved the church and gave himſelf for her* ‡; and as Lord of this feaſt, in his houſe, church, or temple, ſits at the upper end of the *table*, and maketh his gueſts welcome, and biddeth them *eat abundantly and drink abundantly*. The Spirit of God may alſo be intended; for it is he that creates in the ſoul ſpiritual hungrings and thirſtings after this *feaſt of fat things*, and makes a revelation of them unto the ſouls of God's children; yea, he maketh an application of them to their hearts; for he taketh *of Chriſt* || *in all his fulneſs and grace*, in all he hath and is doing for us, and ſhews it unto us; not as things at a diſtance, but as things that we have a perſonal intereſt in,

* Pſal lxxxix. 19. † Gal. iv. 4. ‡ Epheſ. v. 25.
|| John xvi. 14.

yea, the deep things of God; he feeds us under the word, and in *ordinances*, and through the *breaſt* of *promiſes*; and he it is that creates in us ſpiritual *ſenſes* to diſtinguiſh between what are the proviſions of this *feaſt*, and what are not; a ſingular bleſſing in this day, when many are giving God's children a ſerpent inſtead of a fiſh, or a ſtone inſtead of bread; like thoſe fooliſh ſhepherds ſpoken of by the prophet, that *tread down the good paſtures with their feet, and foul the waters of God's ſanctuary* *, that the children of God can neither eat nor drink of them; ſo that all the glorious Three may here be concerned; this title, the *Lord of Hoſts*, is applicable unto them all, in the moſt extenſive ſenſe: Jehovah, God, Father, Son, and Spirit is the God of Hoſts, both of heaven, earth, and hell; this God calleth out his hoſt by number, and doth his pleaſure with them; O amazing and aſtoniſhing grace and love, for the great God to make ſuch a feaſt for fallen, loſt, and undone man; but ſo it hath ſeemed good in his ſight. A word or two by way of reflection, and I have done.

1. A word of exhortation and caution: Take heed, Sirs, to-day; let your moderation be made known to all men; you may feaſt with your friends, it is not unlawful, if rightly managed; but you may hurt and abuſe yourſelves at ſuch feaſts; you may eat

* Ezek. xxxiv. 18.

eat too much, or drink too much, *and ſo be over-charged with ſurfeiting and drunkenneſs* *; and thereby diſhonour Chriſt and wound your conſciences, and bring a reproach upon the ways of God: watch againſt this, leaſt the enemy of your ſouls ſhould get an advantage againſt you; *Remember, meats are for the belly, and the belly for meats, but God ſhall deſtroy both it and them* †: but in this banquet or feaſt in my text, you cannot hurt yourſelves; you can neither *eat* too much, or *drink* too much; the oftner you feed by faith on this feaſt the better; the ſtronger you will grow in faith, and ſo give glory to God; the better fitted for every duty, and every ſervice, for life and for death; *Be not drunk with wine*, ſays the great apoſtle, *wherein is exceſs, but be filled with the ſpirit* ‡; the comforts, the joys and conſolations of which, like wine, chear the hearts of God's children; eat and drink till you are *inebriated*, as Chriſt ſpeaks to his ſpouſe in *Solomon's* Song, *Drink, yea, drink abundantly, O my beloved.*

2. Profeſſor, call thyſelf by what name thou wilt, and build thy hopes ever ſo high, in expectation of feaſting with Chriſt in heaven, if you do not experience what it is to feaſt and feed by faith upon this proviſion now, you are loſt to all eternity; for without faith in Chriſt's perſon, as God's way of ſalvation,

* Luke xxi. 34. † 1 Cor. vi. 13. ‡ Eph. v. 18.

ſalvation, from ſin, wrath, death, and hell, your hope is vain, your foundation *ſandy*; your building will fall about your ears; you are ſtill *feeding upon aſhes, and a deceived heart hath turned you aſide* *; *for there is ſalvation in no other, neither is there any other name given under heaven amongſt men, whereby we muſt be ſaved* †: tho' you may make ever ſo glaring a profeſſion, and ſubmit to all external ordinances, and be in church-relation, and *with the Lord's people at his table*, his eye will ſpy you out, as one that is not a fit gueſt; he will then ſay, *Friend, how cameſt thou in hither, not having on a wedding-garment* ‡? This, it is to be feared, is the caſe of many that build their hopes high for heaven, and yet have not ſet one foot in Chriſt, *the way, the truth, and the life* ‖: God grant it may not be ſo with any of us.

3. and *laſtly*, Honour the founder of this feaſt to-day in all your banquets, by lending a hand to this church, by ſpreading a table for *Chriſt's poor members*; they will not fare as many of you may to-day, tho' they are heirs of God with you, poor in this world, rich in faith, heirs of the kingdom; you that have ability, think of your poor friends and neighbours; do as they of old did, ſend gifts to the poor; *For he that hath pity on the poor lendeth*

* Iſa. xliv. 20. † Acts iv. 12. ‡ Matth. xxii. 12.
‖ John xiv. 16.

lendeth to the Lord, and that which he hath given, he will pay him again ‡. God's bank cannot fail; you truſt men, they fail you, but Chriſt cannot break in any of your debts; take heed you ſpread no table for the devil to-day; I fear many will, when they have eat and drank, like thoſe of old, who *eat and drank and roſe up to play* §; they will then call for cards and dice, and go to a variety of deſtructive games: how many have thrown away their eſtates by ſuch pernicious practices, and their ſouls too. There never was more opportunity of ſinful and abominable diverſions than now, but eſpecially at ſuch ſeaſons of the year as this; *as if Chriſt was the miniſter of ſin*, or came into the world to encourage it. Suffer none of theſe things in your houſes; *you that are parents or maſters*, be not examples of this kind to your children and ſervants, leſt they have cauſe to lay their deſtruction at your door another day; but *I hope better things of you, and things that accompany ſalvation, though I thus ſpeak* *.

‡ Prov. xix. 17. § Exod. xxxii. 6. * Heb. vi. 9.

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